

from passage of TRIA, the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act, which is so important. We must do that before the end of the year or it will bring business to a real slowdown here in America.

We also were unable to get the modernization of FHA done, even though it passed the House overwhelmingly and came out of committee here by a vote of 20 to 1. It is a shame there was an objection to that.

And also AMT, Mr. President. We tried a number of different ways to get that done. It was objected to every time we tried to do something. That is unfortunate. We will continue to work on these things and maybe before the day is out, we will get that done.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MAKING EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS—MOTION TO PROCEED

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be 1 hour of debate prior to the cloture vote on the motion to proceed to S. 2340.

The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, today we have an opportunity before us. With the bill we will consider, we can do what the American people have asked us to do. We can begin to bring the war in Iraq to a close.

More than 3,800 of our servicemembers have died. In fact, as we know, 2007 has been the deadliest year so far in Iraq. And while we spend billions of dollars in Iraq, the list of safety, health, and infrastructure needs at home is stacking up.

Today it is time to begin redeploying our troops, rebuilding our military, and getting back to fighting the war on terror.

I was one of the 23 Senators who voted against the war in Iraq, and since then I have voted time and time again to get us out of this war. That is why I support the bridge funding that is being offered by Senator REID this morning that we will consider.

This bill provides \$50 billion to make sure our troops have what they need to do their job and it requires the President to begin redeploying troops out of Iraq within 30 days after he signs this into law. Our goal with this legislation is to be out of Iraq by the end of next year. And importantly, unlike the bill being offered by the other side, it is not a blank check. It requires American personnel, including the CIA, to follow Army Field Manual rules on torture, it requires the military to give our troops at least a year to rest in between tours of duty, and to ensure that they are battle ready before going into war. So this morning I urge our colleagues to seize this opportunity and put American lives, American security, and

America's future first and begin to change direction in Iraq.

Earlier this year, President Bush promised us his troop surge was going to improve security and allow Iraqis to stabilize their own country, but that is not working. The Washington Post reported Thursday that senior military commanders in Iraq are now saying that the inflexibility of the Shiite government is the key threat facing the U.S. effort there.

We have given the Iraqi Government every chance to step up and take control. We have done our part. The Iraqi Government has not done its part. And in the meantime—while more than 150,000 of our troops are policing a civil war in Iraq—we have become more vulnerable overseas. Terrorist attacks have risen almost fivefold since 9/11.

The President has hidden in his bunker and stubbornly refused to pursue the strategy needed to bring stability in Iraq. It is time for him to face facts. It is time for the Iraqis to take control of their own country and for us to redeploy our troops where they are most needed.

Our bill will allow us to rebuild our military, which is stretched too thin. Generals have testified to Congress that the war in Iraq has weakened our military readiness, destroyed our equipment, hurt our ability to respond to disasters here at home, and left our troops stressed and without fully rounded training. We need to make sure our troops are trained for whatever conflict they face, and changing the direction in Iraq allows us to do that.

We need to fight and win the war on terror and rebuild our military. We also need to be there to support our servicemembers, our veterans, and their families. Our veterans have had to struggle to get basic care because this administration has put them on the back burner. We learned this week that, tragically, thousands of our veterans didn't get the help they needed and they took their own lives. CBS reported that in 2005 alone, 6,256 veterans committed suicide—a rate twice that of other Americans. That is shocking.

The bill we are working on today, and that we hope we can get enough votes for, will ensure we are meeting our veterans' needs every step of the way, from the day they are recruited, while they are trained, while they are deployed, and as they transition back home.

Finally, while President Bush has waged war overseas, he has insisted on paying for it in ways that have left us tragically underfunded here at home. Democrats have taken the right steps to reinvest in the many parts of our budget that have been neglected. We have got to move forward. I hope we can move this legislation that has been offered on our side, because the war in Iraq is not making us more secure, it is making us less secure. It is hurting how our Nation is perceived around the world, it is hurting our military, it is

hurting our veterans, and it is hurting our security at home.

Today we have an opportunity to make progress, and I urge my colleagues to support the bridge funding and send a message to the President that it is time to change course in Iraq.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, how much time remains on the Democratic side?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator may speak for up to 7 minutes. The balance of the time on the Democratic side has already been allocated.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I request 5 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, today we face an opportunity to change the course and the direction of our policy in Iraq. The other body, the House of Representatives, has sent a provision—a bridge appropriations supplemental—to us, which includes language that would change this policy. It would change our missions, it would establish a goal to complete the transition to this new mission by the end of next year, and it would invest resources, energy, and effort in diplomacy as well as military activity. I think it is critical to do that.

We have, for the last several months, seen an increase in American forces on the ground, and the sheer presence and effectiveness of American forces has created some tactical momentum in terms of the security situation. But the fundamental challenge remains to get the policy right in Iraq, and that is the responsibility of the Government of Iraq. In January of this year, 2007, the President announced his surge and he said:

I have made it clear to the prime minister and Iraq's other leaders that America's commitment is not open-ended. If the Iraqi government does not follow through on its promises, it will lose the support of the American people and it will lose the support of the Iraqi people.

Well, those individuals in this body who oppose the House provision, the changed missions, are essentially declaring that there is an open-ended commitment; that we will not condition our resources and our effort in Iraq. I think that is wrong. And, in fact, it is wrong because what has been acknowledged over the last several days is the fact that the Iraqi political leaders have not seized on the situation in Iraq. They have not followed through.

The President proposed his surge because he thought the Government of Iraq would have the breathing space it needed to make progress in other critical areas. No such significant progress has been made. Yesterday, on the front page of The Washington Post, Tom Ricks wrote:

Senior military commanders here now portray the intransigence of Iraq's Shiite-dominated government as the key threat facing

the U.S. effort in Iraq, rather than al-Qaida terrorists, Sunni insurgents, or Iranian-backed militias.

General Odierno, our tactical commander, the corps commander, indicated if that doesn't happen—i.e., the Government taking charge—we are going to have to review our strategy. Well, that is not taking place. We have to review our strategy. Indeed, we have to change our strategy. We have to have a strategy with limited missions, counterterrorism, force protection, training Iraqi security forces. Those are the missions embedded in the supplemental bridge legislation passed by the House. Those are the missions we should pursue. Those are the missions that are essential to our security.

The Iraqi people, the Iraqi Government, must solve their own internal problems. We have given them space. They have not used it. Now we must seize on those mission which will protect the United States without an open-ended, unlimited commitment of our forces and our resources.

I urge that all of our colleagues join together in a bipartisan fashion and strongly support the supplemental bridge legislation proposed by the House, including conditions which are essential to our progress forward in Iraq.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Michigan is recognized.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent I be yielded 5 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. There is only 3½ minutes that have not been allocated.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I ask I be yielded that time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator is recognized.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, once again the Senate has an opportunity to address the situation in Iraq. This morning, we are considering a motion to proceed to H.R. 4156 that contains a so-called bridge fund of \$50 billion for ongoing military operations in Iraq.

The House-passed bill provides for the President, within 30 days after enactment, to commence a phased redeployment of U.S. forces from Iraq and for the transition of those forces to specific missions: (1) protecting U.S. diplomatic facilities, U.S. forces, American citizens; (2) conducting limited training, equipping and providing logistical and intelligence support to Iraqi Security Forces; and (3) engaging in targeted counterterrorism operations against al-Qaida, al Qaida affiliated groups, and other terrorist organizations in Iraq. It sets a goal for the completion of the transition would be December 15, 2008.

Some argue that we should not identify the new more limited missions or commit to transition to them. The President told the American people on September 13 that we will transition to a new phase starting in December and

that "As this transition in mission takes place, our troops will focus on a more limited set of tasks, including counterterrorism operations and training, equipping, and supporting Iraqi forces." Does that sound familiar? Well, it's like the House passed language before us.

It is the goal of completing the transition that he objects to—although it is a goal and not binding. Setting a goal may be too much for he who is unwilling to set a goal—but just don't misrepresent it as a fixed timetable when it is stated as a goal.

From all accounts, the surge has already produced militarily progress—sectarian violence in most regions of Iraq, particularly Baghdad, is down.

The problem is that, while the surge has at this point seen militarily progress, it has not accomplished its primary purpose as announced by President Bush last January, when he stated that its purpose was to give the Iraqi government "the breathing space it needs to make progress in other critical areas." The President also said that "America will hold the Iraqi government to the benchmarks it has announced." Well we haven't. The President statement that he "will hold the Iraqi government to the benchmarks it has announced" is so much hollow rhetoric. Those benchmarks include approving a hydrocarbon law; approving a de-Baathification law; completing the work of a Constitutional Review Committee; and holding provincial elections. Those commitments, made 1½ years ago, which were to have been completed by January 2007, have not yet been kept by the Iraqi political leaders despite the breathing space the surge has provided. As a matter of fact, the Iraqi leaders appear to be farther apart today than they were at the start of the surge. The Iraqi political leadership's response to the breathing space provided by the surge has been nothing less than abysmal.

One year ago this month, the Prime Minister of Iraq, Nouri al-Maliki himself: "The crisis is political, and the ones who can stop the cycle of aggravation and bloodletting of innocents are the [Iraqi] politicians." Secretary of Defense Gates agreed with that assessment in December of last year. President Bush agreed in January. Petraeus agreed in September. If everyone agrees that this is a political crisis, why does the administration keep focusing on military solutions?

General Odierno, according to yesterday's Washington Post, described the breathing space as a window of opportunity, which may close at any time. Whether the Iraqi political leaders decide to take advantage of this window of opportunity is of course their decision. We can't make that decision for them. They are a sovereign country.

But how long U.S. forces remain deployed to Iraq, and with what missions, and how long U.S. forces continue to fight the insurgency instead of the Iraqi army taking over that fight, and

how long we continue to subject our brave and valiant servicemen and women to the risk of death and serious injury—those decisions are in our hands.

Secretary Gates has said that pressure on the Iraqi political leaders is useful. President Bush has acknowledged as much. How can Congress act to put pressure on the Iraqi political leaders? By setting a goal for the transition of the missions of U.S. forces in Iraq to the more supporting and less direct role. The Baker-Hamilton Iraq Study Group in their December 2006 report essentially called for a transition of the mission of U.S. forces in Iraq very much like that called for in this bill—only they called for it to take place by the first quarter of 2008.

We need to do more than say to the Iraqis that our patience has run out and that they need to seize the opportunity that has been given them. Their dawdling will only end when they have no choice.

The bill we will hopefully vote for sets a goal for completion of a transition to missions the President has said were going to transition to. I wish it were binding but setting a timetable as a goal is better than silence which leaves in place the open-endedness of our current presence.

It is that open-ended commitment which continues to create in the minds of the Iraqi political leaders the false impression that their future is in our hands instead of theirs.

We should vote for cloture on the House passed bill and be allowed to vote on its substance.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, this morning we are going to be voting on two supplemental appropriations bills. Both of these bills would appropriate funds for our operations in Iraq—one would provide \$50 billion while the other would provide \$70 billion. However, the key difference between the bills is very simple: the goal of one of the bills is to help our efforts in Iraq succeed, and the goal of the other bill is to make our efforts fail.

H.R. 4156, which passed the House of Representatives on Wednesday by a margin of only 15 votes, would mandate that the funds appropriated through the bill can only be used for a "safe and orderly" withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq and requires that a withdrawal of U.S. forces begin 30 days after enactment with a goal for a complete withdraw of December 15, 2008. If there is a reason the restrictions in this bill sound familiar, it is because they are. This bill employs the same jargon and ill-advised deadlines and withdrawal dates that the majority tried on the Defense authorization bill and fiscal year 2007 supplemental appropriations bill earlier this year. Those strategies failed and, in the case of the appropriations bill, the proposed restrictions were removed after a Presidential veto and Congress then passed

a supplemental appropriations bill without surrender dates. These strategies will fail this time as well, and they will fail for several reasons.

First, in the midst of progress in Iraq—which no one denies—and a strategy which is working, it simply does not make sense to tie the hands of the commanders on the ground and force them to implement a strategy which—in the best judgment of our military leaders, our intelligence agencies, and the perspective of countless outside observers—will lead to the failure of our mission and the rapid deterioration of conditions in Iraq and for the Iraqi people.

Second, the type of restrictions and conditions in this bill exceed both the authority and the expertise of the legislative branch. For example, section 104 of the bill requires that no unit can be deployed to Iraq unless it is certified to be fully mission capable 15 days prior to deployment. Everyone will agree that our troops need to be trained, rested, and ready to execute the missions they are given. No one will disagree that the global war on terrorism has stretched our military and that our military is having to adapt to meet the challenges we put before them. However, to legislate readiness levels in a time of war is extremely unwise and—in my judgment—unconstitutional. Although appealing at face value, such restrictions will hamper our commanders, ability to respond to crises and weaken their ability to take advantage of momentum. These types of restrictions would have compromised our effectiveness and success in previous military engagements with catastrophic results.

Third, the strategy which inspires these restrictions is—at root level—not a military strategy. It is a political strategy. The tactics being used by those who would enact conditions and deadlines like those in this bill are not based on any strategic thought or analysis—instead they respond to a political base that is anti-war and refuses to acknowledge the progress we are making. Political strategies for fighting wars—like the strategy we are dealing with now—all have one thing in common—they result in failure. They are shortsighted, politically motivated, and—most importantly—do not serve any national security objective.

We are making progress in Iraq. The strategy our President and our military commanders have implemented is working. We are receiving regular updates from our leaders in Iraq which are not “glowing,” but they are positive. Most importantly, our leaders are adjusting their strategy in accordance with developments on the ground as well as the realities back home. They are doing this wisely, not hastily, or in response to opinion polls, but according to good judgment and a realistic assessment of what will work, what won’t work, and what is appropriate at this point of time. H.R. 4156 will put a stop to our leaders’ ability to do this.

It will keep them from doing the jobs we have sent them to do, and that is to lead, to decide, to make judgments, and to report back to us on their effectiveness.

One week from today, I will be in Iraq. I will be spending Thanksgiving day with the troops and I am so looking forward to it. While we are there on this bipartisan trip, we are going to be getting the facts about what is happening in Iraq. I know militarily, as I stated, we are moving forward. That is what this bill is all about, supporting our troops. But at the same time, we know there are challenges there, particularly on the political side. The stability of the Iraqi Government is not where we want it to be, and we are going to be delivering a bipartisan message from this body that it is time for the Iraqi leadership to get their political Government in order and it is time for them to begin to exercise real leadership of the Iraqi people because we are not going to be there forever.

They now have the ability, because of the great work the men and women of the U.S. military have done and continue to do, to provide stability to that Government, and that message will be delivered very clearly.

For all the above reasons, I urge my colleagues to vote against H.R. 4156 and in support of Senators MCCONNELL and STEVENS’ alternative, S. 2340.

Now I wish to move to the other vote we are going to be taking today.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator may proceed.

THE FARM BILL

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I rise today to address the upcoming vote to restrict debate on the Food and Energy Security Act of 2007. Rule XXII has historically been used in the Senate of the United States as a way to limit the duration of debate on bills of consequence. This rule is typically utilized when the Senate—long known for its ability to conduct lengthy and protracted debates—is unable to conduct its business in a timely fashion due to a threat of filibuster or an unwillingness on the part of some Senators to end debate and vote on critical legislation.

Today, the Senate has been forced into a cloture vote, not because we have conducted a protracted debate with no end in sight; not because a filibuster has been employed by the minority; not because there is a lack of desire by anyone in the Senate to pass a farm bill; but because the past precedent of conducting a fair and open farm bill debate was trampled upon before this process was even started.

Both Democrats and Republicans have utilized the procedural tool of “filling the tree” in the past in an effort to restrict our deliberative process. Each circumstance for employing this tool is unique and I respect the right of the majority leader to choose this process; but I certainly wish he would have chosen a more bipartisan approach. The bill we passed out of the

Agriculture Committee enjoyed so much support from our committee members that it was passed unanimously by voice vote. Our committee knew and understood that a bill of this magnitude would not only have to face the scrutiny of the entire Senate; but that it would also likely be amended in some form or fashion. We recognized and embraced that fact because we knew the strong bipartisan support within our committee would allow us to debate this legislation on the floor under the guiding principle of providing an effective safety net for America’s farmers and ranchers; rather than the principles of political partisanship and procedural maneuvers.

Unfortunately, as occurred with the House version of the farm bill, partisan politics were inserted into this debate at the final hour and have successfully transformed a bill that enjoyed vast bipartisan support into a partisan spectacle on the Senate floor.

Let me be clear to every Senator on the floor and every farmer and rancher in America listening today; I have a vested interest in the passage of this legislation. I have tirelessly worked on the farm bill before us today for over 2 years. I have traveled the entire country and held field hearings to garner the views of America’s farmers and ranchers. I have conducted oversight hearings, initiated GAO investigations, traveled to rural destinations across this great country and have met with everyone with an interest in this bill from the peanut farmer in Georgia to Agricultural Ministers from foreign lands.

I have done all of these things with a singular goal in mind; that is, to craft a 2007 farm bill that will carry American agriculture into the next 5 years in a very prosperous way. With the help of my friends on the Agriculture Committee, both Democratic and Republican, and particularly the chairman, and particularly Senator CONRAD, I believe we have accomplished just that.

No one can challenge my sincere desire to pass this bill. I reject any suggestion that I do not want a farm bill. But I want a farm bill done the right way, a farm bill that is debated under the long-held principles of this body that any Member may offer any amendment he or she desires. Had we taken this approach on Tuesday morning, November 6, I am quite confident that today we would be voting on final passage rather than attempting to restrict a debate that has yet to even occur.

It is, frankly, irresponsible and disrespectful to the Members of this body that we would constrict debate on this critical piece of legislation to the rules of postcloture without allowing any substantive debate. To be clear, there has been no debate on the farm bill in the 10 days it has been on the floor—not one vote, not one amendment considered, not one meaningful debate on the substance and merits of the Food and Energy Security Act of 2007.

Every Member must understand that if we vote for cloture today, we will limit every Member's ability to offer amendments they believe are vital to this bill. Some will argue that 30 hours of debate will be adequate to address the concerns of Members, but history tells a clear and different story.

During the 2002 farm bill debate, the Senate held three cloture votes, and they all failed. The farm bill was only allowed to move forward when the then-Senate majority leader finally allowed an open process. Once he did so, the bill was completed in a little over a week. An open process served the Senate then, and it will serve us well today.

I respect this body. I respect the Members who rightfully have an opportunity to debate any piece of legislation brought before them. It is not in our interest nor in the interest of the American agricultural producer to force this bill through the Senate without the due consideration of the Members who so passionately represent them. Let us not rush to the finish line simply to stumble on our final step. A deliberative process will serve America well and perhaps will allow the bipartisan spirit of our Senate Agriculture Committee to infect and overwhelm the partisan rancor on the Senate floor.

I humbly urge my colleagues to vote against the motion to invoke cloture.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, let me first respond to my friend from Georgia and for the benefit of all Senators make it quite clear that if we have cloture on the farm bill this morning, we will still be allowed to have up to 3 days, 3 full days of debate, 30 hours, and untold numbers of amendments. Every amendment that is relevant and germane to agriculture in the farm bill will be allowed to be offered and voted on. I wish to make that very clear.

Now, if a Senator wants votes on immigration, well then put it on some other bill. If he wants to vote on taxes, put it on some other bill. If they want to vote on whatever else they might want to bring up that is important, put it on another bill. Let's do what is needed for our farmers and ranchers and rural America and get the farm bill passed. That is what this cloture vote will do this morning.

Now, you know, we have a good, strong bipartisan bill. We came out of committee on a voice vote without one dissenting vote voiced—without one. We spent a day and a half—a record short time to my knowledge—in getting a farm bill through the committee.

Mrs. HUTCHINSON. Would the Senator yield for a unanimous consent request?

Mr. HARKIN. Without losing my right to the floor, of course.

Mrs. HUTCHINSON. I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to follow the Senator from Iowa for up to 2 minutes.

Mr. DURBIN. Reserving the right to object.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask if this is additional time being requested for debate on the bill or under the time allotted?

Mrs. HUTCHINSON. Under the time allotted.

Mr. DURBIN. I withdraw my objection.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask that the preceding few minutes not come from my time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. They have not.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, the farm bill before us was laid down 10 days ago. Yet during that time we have been blocked from voting on any amendments—not one amendment in 10 days. So the majority leader has correctly filed a cloture motion in an effort to allow this body to offer, debate and vote on amendments and pass this vital legislation without further unreasonable delay. The cloture vote, I say to all, is pivotal, crucial as to whether we will have a new farm bill this year. Everyone knows it. Let me remind my colleagues of what is at stake, why it is so critically important that we put an end to the delay and move ahead.

The pending legislation stays within strict pay-go budget limits. Yet we provide good farm income protection; we promote new economic opportunities for farm and ranch families, especially in the area of energy production; and we help dairy farmers and especially the specialty crop producers all across America. There is more in this bill for specialty crops than any farm bill ever passed in the history of this country. The bill boosts economic growth, jobs, and quality of life in rural America with rural development money in the bill. It makes major new investments in conservation of our natural resources, to save soil, increase water quality, restore wetlands and wildlife habitat. A big part of this farm bill will allow low-income Americans to put a little more food on the family table and to improve the diets not only of our families but of our kids in school. We also have very strong provisions in this bill to help restore our national energy security by promoting biofuels, other renewable energy sources and rural energy initiatives.

These are just some of the highlights that are in this bill. There is much more in the farm bill to benefit rural America and all of our Nation. We have come too far with this bill, we have accomplished too much to let this vitally important bill languish and stall. In fact, at this point, the fate of this bill is in jeopardy—in jeopardy. That is why this cloture vote is so critical.

We are at a procedural impasse. We simply cannot obtain the necessary cooperation from the Republican leadership. They will not agree to a reason-

able plan that we debate and deal with relevant, germane amendments so that we avoid having the farm bill even further sidetracked by becoming a Christmas tree of nongermane, nonrelevant amendments, far off the subject of dealing with the farm bill.

I tried—I tried to obtain consent to allow the Senate to debate and vote on amendments that Republicans themselves have filed and presumably wanted to offer, debate and vote on. I asked unanimous consent to bring them up, get a time limit, and vote on them. My request was rejected out of hand. We cannot even get consent to adopt over 50 amendments that have been agreed upon on both sides for a managers' amendment—50 that have been agreed upon. We cannot even get consent to adopt those. Now that shows you how unreasonable—how unreasonable this lack of cooperation has become.

I certainly hope the situation is not a deliberate and orchestrated attempt to stop the farm bill dead in its tracks, but I am beginning to wonder. There are enough rumors floating around. When rumors start coming from different sources, you know there may be something behind them. What I am hearing is that the White House has put out the word behind the scenes to stop this farm bill—stop it. Now, why is that? I began to wonder.

Well, keep in mind, the White House has issued a statement of policy threatening a veto of the farm bill as passed by the House. Then the White House issued a threat to veto the farm bill reported by the Senate Agriculture Committee. So that means if we pass the bill, if we go to conference, we will probably send the White House something they said they would veto.

I suspect some of the White House political people said: You cannot veto a farm bill. Do you want to lose all of rural America for the Republican Party next year? You cannot veto that farm bill. So perhaps instead it would be better if the bill never made it to the White House. Kill the bill here in the Senate. Kill it here.

I see the heavy hand of the White House behind what is going on here. I have worked very closely with Senator CHAMBLISS. We have worked very hard to get to this point. We have worked very hard to get a bipartisan coalition together. But I detect something else interfering here: I detect the White House's heavy hand coming in, telling people what to do and what not to do.

The majority leader has done the appropriate thing by filing cloture. Now, let me again repeat, cloture does not cut off debate, and it does not cut off any relevant, germane amendment to the farm bill. As I said, if we vote for cloture this morning, we can have 3 days of debate, 10 hours a day. We can have 20 amendments or more debated and voted on, plus the 50 we have already agreed upon and others. Plus, every amendment that is relevant and germane is guaranteed an up-or-down vote at the end of cloture. No one will

be denied a vote on an amendment to the farm bill as long as it is relevant and germane. If someone wants to add a Christmas tree ornament dealing with immigration or foreign relations or the war in Iraq or something, yes, that amendment is out after cloture. They will not be able to offer that amendment. But that comes down to the question, do you want a farm bill or not? Do you want a farm bill or not? It is too important to allow a small minority or the White House—maybe people here are bowing to pressure from the White House—to hold it up indefinitely.

We are falling behind. If we get cloture, we can move ahead aggressively. We can come back after the Thanksgiving recess, spend about 2 or 3 days, 3 days on the farm bill, and it would pass the Senate. We can go to conference, work out our differences, and send the bill to the White House. That will not happen if we do not get cloture. If we do not get cloture, my friends, there may well not be any farm bill.

Now, who has a stake in this? I have a good number of letters here with many signatures. I ask unanimous consent to have them printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

The ACTING PRESIDENT *pro tempore*. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(See exhibit 1.)

Mr. HARKIN. Here is a letter with 11 groups telling us to move forward without further delay, everything from the American Farmland Trust and Audubon, to the National Wildlife Federation and the Izaak Walton League of America.

Here is another letter with 185 signatures urging the Senate to vote for cloture. Many of those signing the letter are antihunger and nutrition groups ranging from the America's Second Harvest to the Atlanta Community Food Bank, the Food Bank of North Alabama, the Food Bank of the Albemarle in North Carolina—food banks and others who fight hunger all over the country realize they need this farm bill. The National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, National Farmers Union, National Milk Producers Federation and many others—again, 185 groups on this letter asking us to vote for cloture this morning.

Here is another letter—61 groups who wrote in late September calling for expedited action on the new farm bill. Well, that is what cloture is—expedited action. This letter is signed by groups from the American Farm Bureau Federation, to the American Soybean Association, to the National Association of Wheat Growers, the National Cotton Council, Pheasants Forever, and the School Nutrition Association, to name just a few. They want expedited action.

The ACTING PRESIDENT *pro tempore*. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. HARKIN. How much time do I have?

The ACTING PRESIDENT *pro tempore*. The Senator has consumed his 10 minutes.

Mr. HARKIN. I urge all Senators to vote for cloture and let us get this critical farm bill passed, go to conference, send it to the White House, and get it signed before Christmas.

EXHIBIT 1

NOVEMBER 15, 2007.

DEAR SENATOR: The undersigned conservation organizations urge the Senate to move forward with consideration of the farm bill without further delay but with full and fair consideration of relevant amendments. We need a new and improved conservation title, and extension of the 2002 Farm Bill is not, in our view, an acceptable alternative. We believe the bill reported by the Agriculture Committee makes very important strides in addressing key conservation issues and programs, but we also are united in the view that important improvements to both policy and funding need to be made on the floor. Therefore, we urge you to move as quickly as possible to considering, amending, and passing a new farm bill.

Sincerely,

American Farmland Trust, Audubon, Center for Native Ecosystems, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Coevolution Institute, Defenders of Wildlife, Izaak Walton League of America, National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture, National Wildlife Federation, Natural Resources Defense Council, Sustainable Agriculture Coalition.

NOVEMBER 15, 2007.

*U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.*

DEAR SENATOR: The undersigned organizations write to urge the Senate to vote in favor of the farm bill cloture motion. It is critical that the Senate pass omnibus farm legislation as soon as possible in order to assure enactment of a new farm bill this year.

While our organizations have differences on specific policy recommendations, we believe it is vitally important that the Senate pass a 2007 Farm Bill as soon as possible. The 2002 law expired in September, leaving farmers and ranchers uncertain of the policy environment in which they will operate next year and several conservation and nutrition programs expired. These programs that conserve land resources and serve poor and hungry people must be reauthorized and adequately funded now.

Extending the 2002 Farm Bill is not an acceptable alternative to enacting new legislation that addresses important needs in each of these areas. Extension is only a short term solution that does not provide the assurances that the nutrition, agriculture, conservation and renewable energy communities need for efficient long-term planning.

We worked with the Senate Agriculture Committee to develop a farm bill that addresses our priorities, but are concerned that delayed floor action is lessening the chances of completing a new farm bill this year. We therefore urge a yes vote on the cloture motion on this important legislation.

Sincerely,

AARP; Alameda County Community Food Bank; America's Second Harvest—The Nation's Food Bank Network; American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy; American Farmland Trust; American Heart Association; American Public Health Association; American Wind Energy Association; America's Second Harvest of KY's Heartland Food Bank; America's Second Harvest of Wisconsin; Association

of American Veterinary Medical Colleges; Association of Arizona Food Banks; Atlanta Community Food Bank; Bay Area Food Bank, Theodore, Alabama; Blue Ridge Area Food Bank, Verona, Virginia; California Association of Food Banks; California Food Policy Advocates; California Hunger Action Coalition; Capital Area Food Bank of Texas; Care and Share Food Bank for Southern Colorado; Cathedral Kitchen, Camden, New Jersey; Center for Civil Justice, Michigan; Center for Public Policy Priorities, Texas; Central Pennsylvania Food Bank; Children's Alliance, Washington; Children's Hunger Alliance, Ohio; Children's Sentinel Nutrition Assessment Program (C-SNAP); Cleveland Foodbank, Inc.; Coalition on Human Needs; Community Food Security Coalition; Colorado Anti-Hunger Network; Colorado Food Bank Association; Community Food Bank of New Jersey; Community Food Banks of South Dakota; Congressional Hunger Center; Connecticut Association for Human Services; Connecticut Food Bank; Dare to Care Food Bank, Louisville, Kentucky; DC Hunger Solutions; Denver Urban Ministries.

Emergency Food and Shelter Program, NYC; End Hunger Connecticut; End Hunger Network, Houston, Texas; Environmental and Energy Study Institute; Environmental Law and Policy Center; Familia Center, Santa Cruz, California; Feeding Indiana's Hungry (FIsh); Feinstein Center for a Hunger Free America, University of Rhode Island; Florida Impact; Food & Water Watch; Food Bank for New York City; Food Bank of Alaska; Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina; Food Bank of Central New York; Food Bank of Delaware; Food Bank of Iowa; Food Bank of Lincoln, Nebraska; Food Bank of North Alabama; Food Bank of South Jersey; Food Bank of the Albemarle, North Carolina; Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley, Inc.; FOOD for Lane County, Eugene Oregon; Food Research & Action Center (FRAC); FOOD Share, Inc., Oxnard, CA.

Foodbank of the Virginia Peninsula; FoodLink for Tulare County, Inc.; Foodshare, Bloomfield, CT; FRAMAX Child Care Food Program, Modesto; Georgia State Food Bank Association; Gleaners Food Bank of Indiana, Inc.; God's Pantry Food Bank, Lexington, Kentucky; Great Plains Food Bank, Fargo, ND; Greater Chicago Food Depository; Greater Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger; Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank; Harry Chapin Food Bank, Ft. Myers, Florida; Harvesters—The Community Food Network, Kansas City, Missouri; Houston Food Bank; Hunger Solutions Minnesota; Illinois Food Bank Association; Illinois Hunger Coalition; Island Harvest, Mineola, New York; Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes, Michigan; Kansas Food Bank; Kentucky Task Force on Hunger.

Lincoln County Food Share, Newport, Oregon; Los Angeles Regional Foodbank; Louisiana Food Bank Association; Manna Food Center, Rockville, Maryland; MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger; Mercer Street Friends Food Bank, Ewing, New Jersey; Michigan Legal Services; Middle Georgia Community Food Bank, Macon, Georgia; Midwest Dairy Coalition; Migrant Legal Action Program; Minnesota Food

Share; Mississippi Food Network; Montana Food Bank Network; N.C. Cooperative Extension, Mitchell County Center; College of Agriculture and Life Sciences; North Carolina State University; National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd; National Association of Conservation Districts; National Association of County and City Health Officials; National Association of State Departments of Agriculture; National Association of State Energy Officials; National Center for Law and Economic Justice.

National Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) Association; National Farmers Union; National Milk Producers Federation; National Puerto Rican Coalition, Inc.; Nebraska Appleseed Center for Law in the Public Interest; New Hampshire Food Bank; New Jersey Anti-Hunger Coalition; New Mexico Association of Food Banks; NM Human Needs Coordinating Council; North Texas Food Bank; Northeast Iowa Food Bank; Nutrition Consortium of NYS, Inc., New York; NYC Coalition Against Hunger; Ohio Association of Second Harvest Food Banks; OMB Watch; Oregon Food Bank; Oregon Hunger Relief Task Force; Ozarks Food Harvest, Springfield, Missouri; PANDORA-Patient Alliance for Neuroendocrine-immune Disorders Organization for Research and Advocacy, Inc.; Partners in Ending Hunger, Maine.

Pennsylvania Hunger Action Center; Public Policy Center of Mississippi; Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma; RESULTS/RESULTS Educational Fund; Roadrunner Food Bank, Albuquerque, New Mexico; San Francisco Food Bank; Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law; Second Harvest Food Bank for San Diego; Second Harvest Food Bank of Greater New Orleans and Acadiana; Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee; Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County; Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties, California; Second Harvest Food Bank of the Chattahoochee Valley, Columbus, Georgia; Second Harvest Gleaners Food Bank of West Michigan, Inc.; Second Harvest Heartland, Maplewood, Minnesota; Second Harvest Inland Northwest, Spokane, Washington; Second Harvest North Central Food Bank, Grand Rapids, Minnesota; Second Harvest Northern Lakes Food Bank, Duluth, Minnesota; SHARE Food Program, Inc., Philadelphia; Side Campaign Against Hunger, New York City; So Others Might Eat, Inc. (SOME), Washington, D.C.

Social Ministries Task Force, Presbytery of Des Moines, Iowa; Society of Saint Andrew; South Plains Food Bank, Lubbock, Texas; Southern New Hampshire Services, Inc.; Southern Peanut Farmers Federation; St. Leo Food Connection, Tacoma, Washington; St. Louis Area Foodbank; St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance, Phoenix, Arizona; Statewide Food Network of New Jersey; TEFAP Alliance; The Food Bank of Central Louisiana; The Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana; The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, Inc.; The Food Bank, Memphis, Tennessee; The Foodbank, Inc., Dayton, Ohio;

The Greater Boston Food Bank; The Jewish Council for Public Affairs; The Kauai Food Bank, Inc., Hawaii; Union for Reform Judaism; United Food and Commercial Workers International Union; United Food Bank, Mesa, Ari-

zona; USAction/USAction Education Fund; Utahns Against Hunger; Ventura County Food Bank; Vermont Campaign to End Childhood Hunger; Vermont Foodbank; Weld Food Bank, Greeley, Colorado; Western Organization of Resource Councils; WHEAT, Phoenix, Arizona; World Hunger Year (WHY).

SEPTEMBER 28, 2007.

Hon. HARRY REID,
Majority Leader,
U.S. Senate.

Hon. TOM HARKIN,
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition,
and Forestry, U.S. Senate.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Minority Leader,
U.S. Senate.

Hon. SAXBY CHAMBLISS,
Ranking Member, Committee on Agriculture,
Nutrition, and Forestry, U.S. Senate.

DEAR SENATORS REID, MCCONNELL, HARKIN, AND CHAMBLISS: The undersigned organizations write to support expedited action on the 2007 Farm Bill. It is critical that the Senate develop omnibus farm legislation as soon as possible in order to assure enactment of a new farm bill this year.

While our organizations have differences on specific policy recommendations, we believe it is vitally important that the Senate Agriculture Committee mark up and pass a 2007 Farm Bill as soon as possible. Only a few days remain before provisions of the 2002 law expire. Farmers and ranchers need certainty on the policy environment in which they will operate next year. Several conservation and nutrition programs expire at the end of the fiscal year. These programs that conserve land resources and serve poor and hungry people must be reauthorized and adequately funded now.

Extending the 2002 Farm Bill is not an acceptable alternative to enacting new legislation that addresses important needs in each of these areas. Extension is only a short-term solution that does not provide the assurances that the nutrition, agriculture and conservation communities need for efficient long-term planning.

We are working with the Senate Agriculture Committee to develop a farm bill that addresses our priorities, but are concerned that delayed action on this legislation is lessening the chances of completing a new farm bill this year. We therefore urge a quick and favorable resolution to the funding and other outstanding issues that are holding up action on this important legislation. We look forward to working with you to move this process forward in the Senate in the coming weeks.

Sincerely,

AARP; Alliance to End Hunger; American Farm Bureau Federation; American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME); American Malting Barley Association, Inc.; American Soybean Association; America's Second Harvest; Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies; Children's Sentinel Nutrition Assessment Program (C-SNAP); Coalition of Human Needs; Community Food Security Coalition; Congressional Hunger Center; End Hunger Network; First Focus; Food Research and Action Center; Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA); MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger; Migrant Legal Action Program; National Association of Conservation Districts; National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils; National Association of Wheat Growers; National Barley Growers Associa-

tion; National Cotton Council; National Corn Growers Association; National Council of Farmer Cooperatives; National Commodity Supplemental Food Program Association; National Education Association (NEA); National Farmers Union; National Grange; National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty; National Milk Producers Federation; National Policy and Advocacy Council on Homelessness (NPACH); National Pork Producers Council; National Recreation and Park Association; National Sorghum Producers; National Sunflower Association; National WIC Association; National Wild Turkey Foundation; NETWORK: A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby.

OMB Watch; Pheasants Forever; Presbyterian Church (USA) Washington Office; Quail Unlimited; RESULTS; School Nutrition Association; Share Our Strength; Society of St. Andrew; Southern Peanut Farmers Federation; Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance; The Brewers Association; The United Methodist Church—General Board of Church and Society; U.S. Canola Association; U.S. Dry Bean Council; U.S. Rice Producers Association; USAction; USA Dry Pea and Lentil Council; USA Rice Federation; Voices for America's Children; Wider Opportunities for Women; YWCA USA.

SPECIALTY CROP
FARM BILL ALLIANCE,
November 15, 2007.

Hon. HARRY REID,
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATORS REID AND MCCONNELL: The Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance, a national coalition of more than 120 specialty crop organizations representing 350 specialty crops, is disappointed in the lack of progress that is being made by the Senate regarding the consideration and passage of the 2007 Farm Bill. The reauthorization of the Farm Bill represents an historic opportunity to move agriculture into the 21st Century by investing key resources into the livelihoods and business of specialty crop producers across the country.

Most importantly, this ongoing delay with the 2007 Farm Bill will make it difficult to enact legislation that addresses the needs of the specialty crop industry, which include increasing the role of specialty crops to improve nutrition, expanding production and product innovation research capabilities and improving critical procedures to control for invasive pests and diseases from entering this country. Therefore, it is critical that the Senate resolve their differences and pass a bill expeditiously so that a conference committee can be appointed and a final bill can be approved in 2007.

Specialty crop producers across the nation urge the Senate leadership and members of the Senate to come together quickly to pass a new Farm Bill for American farmers and consumers.

Thank you for your consideration of these important matters.

Sincerely,

Alabama Watermelon Association; American Mushroom Institute; American Nursery and Landscape Association; Arizona Winegrowers Association; Blue Diamond Growers; Buy California Marketing Agreement; California Association of Nurseries & Garden Centers; California Association of Wine Grape

Growers; California Citrus Mutual; California Dried Plum Board; California Fig Institute; California Fresh Fig Growers Association; California Grape and Tree Fruit League; California Strawberry Commission; California Table Grape Commission; California Walnut Commission; California-Arizona Watermelon Association; Cherry Marketing Institute; Colorado Potato Administrative Committee; Colorado Wine Industry Development Board.

Connecticut Farm Wine Development Council; Connecticut Vineyard & Winery Association; Empire State Potato Growers; Florida Citrus Mutual; Florida Citrus Packers; Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association; Florida Strawberry Growers Association; Florida Tomato Exchange; Florida Watermelon Association; Fruit Growers Marketing Association; Georgia Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association; Georgia Watermelon Association; Grower-Shipper Association of Central California; Idaho Grape Growers and Wine Producers Commission; Idaho Grower Shippers Association; Idaho Potato Commission; Indian River Citrus League; Indiana-Illinois Watermelon Association; Leafy Greens Council; Maine Potato Board.

Maryland-Delaware Watermelon Association; Maryland Wineries Association; Miami-Dade County; Michigan Apple Committee; Minnesota Area II Potato Growers Research and Promotion Council; Minnesota Grape Growers Association; Missouri Wine & Grape Board; Missouri-Arkansas Watermelon Association; National Berry Crop Initiative; National Grape Cooperative Association; National Grape and Wine Initiative; National Onion Association; National Potato Council; National Watermelon Association; New England Vegetable and Berry Growers; New Mexico Wine Growers Association; New York Apple Association; New York Wine & Grape Foundation; North American Blueberry Council; North American Bramble Growers Association.

North American Strawberry Growers Association; North Carolina Blueberry Council; North Carolina Grape & Wine Council; North Carolina Potato Association; North Carolina Strawberry Association; North Carolina Watermelon Association; Northern Kentucky Vintners & Grape Growers Association; Northwest Horticultural Council; Northern Plains Potato Growers; Ocean Spray Cranberries, Inc.; Ohio Wine Producers Association; Oklahoma Grape Growers & Wine Makers Association; Oregon Potato Commission; Oregon Raspberry & Blackberry Commission; Oregon Strawberry Commission; Oregon Winegrowers Association; Peace River Valley Citrus Growers Association; Peerbolt Crop Management; Potato Growers of Idaho; Produce Marketing Association.

Rocky Mountain Association of Vintners & Viticulturists; Society of American Florists; South Carolina Watermelon Association; South Florida Tropical Fruit Growers Association; Sun Maid Growers; Sunkist Growers, Incorporated; Tennessee Farm Winegrowers Association; Texas Citrus Mutual; Texas Produce Association; Texas-Oklahoma Watermelon Association; Texas Vegetable Association; Texas Wine & Grape Growers Association; Tropical Fruit Growers of South Flor-

ida; U.S. Apple Association; United Fresh Potato Growers of Idaho; United Fresh Produce Association; United Potato Growers of America; Virginia Apple Growers Association; Virginia Wineries Association; Washington Association of Wine Grape Growers.

Washington Red Raspberry Commission; Washington Apple Commission; Washington State Potato Commission; Welch's; Western Growers; Western Pistachio Association; Wild Blueberry Commission; WineAmerica; Wine Institute; Winegrape Growers of America; Winegrowers Association of Georgia; WineMichigan; Wine Producers Commission; Wyoming Grape & Wine Association.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the remaining Republican time be divided equally between Senators GRAHAM, THUNE, and SESSIONS, and that I be allowed to speak at this point.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, we know what the deal is. The Senator from Iowa knows what the problem is. The Democratic leadership is refusing to allow amendments on the farm bill, and the farm bill is not going to pass until they do. And they are going to allow amendments at some time, and we are going to pass a farm bill. That is what the truth is, and everybody knows it here.

But I want to talk about something that is really troubling to me. We had a hearing yesterday in the Armed Services Committee. The Secretary of the Army, Pete Geren, and GEN George Casey, the Chief of Staff of the Army, told us that they are reaching a crisis in maintaining support for our troops in Iraq, that they need desperately for this Congress to fulfill its responsibility to support the troops we have sent into the field in harm's way to execute the policy of this Nation.

They are there because we sent them there. They are doing fabulous work, and they need support.

Just remember, this summer we had a long debate about what to do. President Bush said we need to change our policy. The American people said we need to change our policy. We sent General Petraeus there. I see the Senator from Texas. I don't know if she wants additional time.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I had 2 minutes. I would be happy to follow the Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. I ask unanimous consent that 2 minutes be allocated to the Senator from Texas.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SESSIONS. We really need to do this. We voted after a full debate this summer to give General Petraeus a chance, asked him to come back and report in September. We voted 80 to 14 to fund the surge, and General Petraeus came back with positive re-

ports in September. But it was early. We were not sure what was going to be the true trend. Since September, the situation in Iraq has improved to a degree I did not expect possible. The casualties are down two-thirds from earlier in the summer. It appears al-Qaida is completely on the run. Great progress has been made. It is unthinkable at this point, after all we have been through, the difficult times we had this summer, when progress is being made clearly, indisputably, that we would now jerk the rug out from under our soldiers. We have to do this. We need Senator REID to quit saying we are losing and quit saying this is not working, while our soldiers are making progress. How demoralizing is that?

I urge my colleagues to vote to support our troops at this critical point as we are making progress.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Texas is recognized for 2 minutes.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I rise to speak against the bridge bill that was sent over by the House of Representatives. I hope the Senate can do what the Senate has been doing all year, and that is stop these reckless amendments that would tie the hands of our generals, that would dictate policy on the ground in Iraq from 6,000 miles away, from people who do not know what is going on on the ground, it seems. We have voted 40 times in the last year, since February, on amendments that would constrain the troops in the field doing what they are doing. Last week the Iraqi Government and U.S. commanders proclaimed that al-Qaida had been routed in every neighborhood in Baghdad, an 80-percent drop in the murder rate. The BBC reports that all across Baghdad streets are springing back to life, shops and restaurants which closed down are back in business. People are walking on the streets. Things have changed in Baghdad. Things have changed in Iraq. The only place it doesn't seem to change is in the Congress. We should not vote on anything that underfunds the troops, which is what this bridge bill does, and overregulates what our troops in the field are doing when we are not there every day, day in, day out, watching the progress.

General Petraeus is succeeding in quelling the violence. Now we must work with the Iraqis to have stability in that country so we can leave. General Petraeus has already said he is bringing home a brigade from the surge. We are going in the right direction. Let's don't do something foolish in the Senate.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from South Dakota is recognized for 1 minute 45 seconds.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I also want to urge my colleagues to pass the \$70 billion supplemental for the Department of Defense. The McConnell alternative is a funding bill that is free of

political posturing, not influenced by armchair generals. The Department of Defense needs this money, and they need it now. Yesterday, Secretary Geren and General Casey testified before the Armed Services Committee on the state of the Army. When I asked Secretary Geren about what effect the lack of funding was having on the Army, he was frank and clear. The Army will run out of money by February and, what is worse, they will have to start scaling back services and canceling important civilian contracts. Moreover, when the President signed the Defense appropriations bill, it stopped the department's funding under the current continuing resolution. Now the Army is being forced to borrow from its operations and maintenance accounts in its base budget. The Army O&M budget is about \$27 billion. Since the Army spends about \$6.5 billion a month, that money will be gone by February. We are forcing our Army to borrow against itself.

General Casey testified that in the December timeframe nine brigades are coming back from Iraq, and they may return to find services that supported them have been cancelled. Last, when we passed a timely supplemental bill, the Army depots were able to reset 27 brigades, process 123,000 large vehicles, and 10,000 humvees.

Democrats are always going to paint Iraq as a failure, no matter what gains have been made. We need to support our troops and make sure they have the funding to do their job.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from South Carolina is recognized for 1 minute 45 seconds.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I will try to frame the issue the way it deserves. It is going to be hard hitting. Senator REID told me something one time, that we shouldn't run the Congress down. I generally agree with that except here. What we are about to do is take one of the most successful military operations in American history by any measure, the surge, and undercut it by one of the most dysfunctional Congresses in American history, by denying the funding to the troops in the field who have performed.

The House bill would replace military commanders with a dysfunctional Congress that is being led around by its nose by Code Pink and moveon.org, who don't understand success on the battlefield. All they see is the next election, the potential for an ad. Listen to the inflammatory rhetoric.

We are not going to allow the dysfunctional Congress to replace a successful commander. We are not going to send the message to our enemies: You are back into the fight. We are not going to tell our troops: You are a loser; you don't get any more money. We are not going to tell our allies and the brave Iraqis who have jumped on our side that we are leaving. This is ridiculous. It is undercutting America's vital national security interests, and it is telling our soldiers: You are losers—

when they are winners. We are going to defeat it now and forever.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I would like to respond to the comments made by my colleague, the chairman of the Agriculture Committee. It is important to recognize why we are in the procedural predicament we find ourselves in today. This predicament is not based on the Senate Agriculture Committee's inability to come together to protect and enhance our most basic national security interest—food security. We have successfully done that with a bill supported unanimously by the committee—across partisan and regional divide.

To be clear, this is a problem of including, in a farm bill, other extraneous issues that have little to do with agriculture policy. I don't fault the decision to go down this path of including tax-related provisions in the farm bill. It was decided early on. However, we must recognize the full implications of this decision. Indeed, one only need look at what occurred in the other body to see how a bipartisan process can completely disintegrate when other issues are injected into the farm bill debate.

Tax debates are always difficult and the inclusion of tax-related provisions in a piece of legislation has never been known to simplify the legislative process. In this instance, however, as much as I regret its impact on the farm bill, it is simply necessary to allow for debate on the tax-related provisions included in the Food and Energy Security Act of 2007.

I am confident we will work through these difficulties. I am grateful that my colleagues on the Finance Committee were able to avoid the problems created by the inclusion of the Ways and Means provisions in the underlying House bill. However, the tax-related provisions included in the underlying Senate bill have nonetheless complicated our process and we must recognize, accept, and work through the process in a deliberative and responsible manner.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, first I want to congratulate the Senator from Iowa, Mr. HARKIN, and the Senator from Georgia, Mr. CHAMBLISS, for their leadership in the Agriculture Committee and for bringing to the Senate a bipartisan farm bill that works for many family farmers.

I hope this hard work will not be endangered by an amendment that will adversely affect family farms in some States by eliminating the ability for family farms to receive financing, or will prevent farmers from efficiently marketing their crop. Since the passage of the 2002 Farm Bill there has been a good bit of controversy surrounding the issue of payment limits. Much of this has been based on misinformation and is a result of misunderstanding agriculture practices. While I am pleased that the legislation passed by the committee contains significant reforms to address the concerns raised over the

past 6 years, I want to be very clear that these reforms are not easy for producers in my State of Mississippi to accept and will result in many farms having to significantly alter their farming operation. I would like to give an example of how unfair this amendment is to crops grown in the South. Under the Grassley-Dorgan amendment, a cotton and rice farmer in Mississippi could only grow 400 acres of cotton or 225 acres of rice before they reach the limit. In comparison, a soybean and corn farmer in North Dakota could farm 2,000 acres of soybeans or 1,300 acres of corn before they hit the limit.

I believe it is important for my Senate colleagues to understand just how significant the reforms in the committee-passed bill are. This legislation applies direct attribution to the individual farmer, thus making all farm payments transparent. The committee-passed legislation would limit the direct payment a single producer can receive to \$40,000. The legislation reduces the amount of a counter-cyclical payment to \$60,000. In addition, the Senate language reduces the Adjusted Gross Income means test for producers from \$2.5 million all the way down to \$750,000. While this may still sound like a lot of money, when you consider production costs such as \$400,000 cotton picker, fuel prices, fertilizer costs, and technology fees for seed, these levels are quite low.

Many crops of the Midwest are enjoying record prices right now due mostly to the use of corn in the current ethanol boom. The most prevalent crops in the South, cotton and rice, are not seeing the record prices created by the billions of dollars in renewable fuel incentives and tax credit subsidies, and it is important to point out that none of these subsidies is subject to an arbitrary limit.

Agriculture is the economic engine for rural communities located throughout Mississippi. These communities are dependent on family farms to provide the economic activity that generates millions of dollars in tax revenue and thousands of jobs. While we encourage small businesses to grow and prosper in this country, this amendment is telling our family farmers they will be punished if they do the same. The amendment offered by my friends from Iowa and North Dakota would have a very negative impact on a region of this country that already suffers from severe economic depression.

This amendment would have a very negative impact on the livelihood of thousands of farmers. It would undo what many farmers today and generations before them have established through hard work, surviving natural disasters, and even the Great Depression. This amendment is an attempt to drive farmers in my State to conform to the way others operate in very different regions of the country. Not every farmer fits in the same mold, and I ask my colleagues to vote against the Grassley-Dorgan Amendment.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, as we consider the farm bill, I am proud to say that Vermont is leading the Nation in developing programs to bring fresh, local foods to school cafeterias.

Let me begin by recounting the experience of Burlington, VT, which has been replicated in other cities and towns across our State. Five years ago, residents of the city expressed concern about the significant nutritional issues facing the city's children. Twenty percent of the city's children were living in poverty, food insecurity was widespread, and the rate of childhood obesity was steadily increasing. In response, citizens called for an increased commitment to healthy food choices for children and their families.

At the same time, they were aware of the need to promote the local farm economy. So in the fall of 2003, with a U.S. Department of Agriculture grant, the Burlington School Food Project was created.

The program brings fresh foods from local farms to school cafeterias and provides hands-on agricultural education in the classroom. Students at the ten schools in this program are now eating foods that are healthier, more nutritious and from all the reports I have heard, better tasting.

The program also involves students in the process of harvesting, preparing and even taste-testing their own food. This has helped many young Vermonters learn about where food comes from, helping them connect with their local farms and community.

After 4 years of the project's existence, the Burlington school district now prepares 930,000 meals annually using fresh and local produce. Several schools offer salad bars either as a full lunch or as a side item to hot lunches. This has led to better diets and improved health.

The project has also been impressive from an economic standpoint. Last year, for instance, more than 1,000 pounds of local tomatoes, 600 pounds of local zucchini, 600 pounds of carrots and 400 pounds of local basil were used in school meals. The amount of local produce purchased tripled between 2003 and 2006.

Many partners have built upon these successes. Today, I would like to mention two driving forces.

Bonnie Acker, a school parent, took it upon herself to do whatever necessary to improve the quality of the food being served at her child's school. She worked with teachers, students, volunteers, and cafeteria workers at Edmunds Middle School. This school has become a model for others, its cafeteria has been transformed, and its school gardens are rich with color.

The director of the Burlington School Food Service, Doug Davis, provided much of the leadership needed to make BSFP work. When he was approached by parents like Bonnie, he listened. He then immediately took action and spearheaded an effort to buy whole grain breads for the cafeterias.

Doug also introduced initiatives such as taste tests and classrooms linked to the cafeteria. Before long, Burlington students were trying new foods and getting healthier lunches. For his efforts, Doug was presented the North-east award as Food Service Director of the Year.

But Burlington is not alone. Other Vermont school districts have undertaken similar programs, among them:

Brattleboro Elementary Schools, which won a Vermont Farm to School grant to set up a program to promote local food purchasing, taste testing seasonal foods, and to get students to farms for hands-on agricultural experiences. Sheila Humphreys coordinates the program, and Laura White has been a major force in its success.

Waitsfield Elementary worked with VT FEED on local purchasing and developing a food, farm and nutrition curriculum. Key figures in this effort have been school nurse Sue Dillon, as well as George Schenk of American Flatbread, who has been a strong and supportive community member raising money for Waitsfield and other schools.

Orleans Essex North Supervisory Union, where three elementary schools have comprehensive farm to school programs that include local purchasing, school gardening, taste testing of seasonal products, harvest celebrations with farmers and the communities, field studies with students on farms, and the development of farm and food-based classroom activities.

Sharon Elementary School also worked with VT FEED for 3 years developing a food, farm, and nutrition curriculum. Its principal, Sheila Moran, along with teacher Keenan Haley and food service director Lynn Ann Perry, have been instrumental in weaving farm to school into their school culture.

Ferrisburgh Elementary School has involved high school students to do field studies on farms, make a school garden, purchase more local foods and taste-test them, try new recipes using local foods, and have a farmers' market harvest festival for their community.

In addition, Hardwick Elementary School has worked with VT FEED on combining food, farm, and nutrition into the existing curricula, planting crops on farms for school use, and making healthy snacks. Val Simmons, its food service director, has led the effort to reconnect students and school food to the local farms.

Salisbury Elementary School takes students to local farms for field studies and does local food taste testing in classrooms. Here, teacher Diane Benware and food service director Gaye Truax have been prime movers.

On a larger scale, the Food Works' Farm-to-Table program, based in Montpelier, serves as a nonprofit distributor of produce from 18 area farms, delivering the produce throughout the year to 13 schools in central Vermont. In 2007 alone, more than \$50,000 of local produce has been purchased and dis-

tributed through Farm-to-Table. Rick Hungerford, food service director at the U-32 High School in East Montpelier, is now sourcing nearly 14 percent of cafeteria purchases locally while turning a profit and preparing outstanding, healthy food for the entire school community. Ann Gilbert and Liz Scharf, two parents from Rumney Elementary School in Middlesex, spearheaded a grassroots effort to connect their school with local farms, in particular to purchase year-round from local grower Joe Buley, who is new to farming and has invested in greenhouse production so he can sell to schools.

Finally, let me recognize Vermont Food Education Every Day, VT FEED, which uses a community-based approach to school food system change and is the product of a collaboration of three Vermont nonprofits: Food Works, Northeast Organic Farming Association of VT, and Shelburne Farms. It does fine work in building connections between classrooms, cafeterias, local farms, and communities. It is most ably directed by Abbie Nelson and Kim Norris. It has also had strong cooperation from Jo Busha, the State Director of the Vermont Department of Education Child Nutrition Program, in introducing the farm to school concept to many school food service directors.

And this is just the beginning. With strong provisions in the farm bill for beginning farmers, increased funding for fruits and vegetables for schools, and an innovative pilot to work on community gardens in high-poverty schools, I expect Vermont's trailblazing efforts to expand not only in our State, but across the Nation.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I will oppose the motion to proceed to both the Senate and House bills to provide bridge funding to Iraq because they do not contain firm and enforceable dates to get our troops out of Iraq.

Once again, Congress is being asked to pour tens of billions of dollars more into an unending war, for uncertain goals, carried forward by little more than a mixture of blind faith and inertia.

Once again, the American people are being asked to shut their eyes tight against the facts and trudge blindly on—this time at the cost of some \$50 or \$70 billion, depending on which bill we are talking about, and who knows how many more lives. And once again, those who question this war—a majority of Americans—are being asked: You support the troops, don't you?

How could we not? How could we not be awed by the bravery and sacrifice of our men and women in Iraq? How could we not be inspired by their choice to volunteer in the first place? How could we not be impressed by the discipline, competence, intelligence, and resourcefulness with which General Petraeus and the soldiers under his command have fought in Iraq? They deserve our respect and much more.

But contrary to what the President's supporters would have you believe, the

debate does not end there. It begins there. And I have come to the floor today to suggest that the President's supporters would do well to heed key military virtues: recognizing the difference between tactics and strategy—between short term and long term.

All the tactical brilliance in the world will win you nothing if it doesn't find its place within a larger plan for victory. And in Iraq, that plan is exactly where we found it in the spring of 2003—nonexistent.

No one in this Chamber would doubt that recent months in Iraq have seen significant tactical success. The number of IED explosions has dropped significantly.

The total number of enemy attacks, and the number of coalition soldiers killed in action, have been in decline—even though 2007 recently became the deadliest year on record for U.S. troops in Iraq. Iraqi civilian casualties have been cut from a high of 3,000 in the month of December 2006—even though they still hover around an appalling 1,000 per month.

But overall, the security picture in Iraq is, for the time being, improved.

The question is: Why? What made that happen? If anything comes out of this debate, it should be an honest answer to that question—not so we can assign praise and blame but so we can piece together a coherent strategy.

I don't doubt that our troops' dedication did its part to reduce the violence. But if American agency was the sole factor, why was violence in Iraq on the decline before the surge began—even before it was announced? It is clear to me that there have been three deeper causes.

First, Moqtada al-Sadr, a prime mover of sectarian violence, has sat out the surge, patiently waiting for its inevitable end. As *The New Yorker* recently put it: "Analysts credit much of the recent drop in Iraqi civilian deaths not to the surge but to Sadr's decision, in August, to order the Mahdi Army, which is believed to have been responsible for much of the Shiite-on-Sunni sectarian killing in and around Baghdad, to 'freeze' its activities for six months." Sadr and his fellow sectarian leaders may be brutal—but they are also calculating and self-interested.

They know that the surge, whatever is decided here today, cannot be physically sustained indefinitely.

Second, the drop in violence can also be attributed to the so-called Sunni awakening: the decision by tribal leaders in Anbar Province to turn against al-Qaida and foreign jihadists. That choice was laudable and—as shown by Abu Risha, the charismatic tribal leader who allied with America and was murdered for it—truly courageous.

But it was also unforeseen by the surge and began independently of the surge. But as valuable and necessary as the fight against al-Qaida in Iraq has been, it does little to stem the deeper civil war between Sunnis and Shiites—the overwhelming source of Iraq's chaos.

The fight against al-Qaida must go on—but there's no reason why it compels us to police a civil war.

Third and finally, many analysts have argued that violence has bottomed out because Iraq's ethnic cleansing is reaching a conclusion—because Iraq has, de facto, partitioned itself. With almost a million Baghdadis fleeing their homes in the conflict, the city has become ever more ethnically homogenous, reducing Sunni-Shiite flashpoints.

Each of these causes has contributed its part to what some are intemperately hailing as our long-awaited victory. It would be wonderful to believe that America made it happen, after all this time, through sheer force of will. Every one of my colleagues, I am sure, wants to believe that.

But this is the clear line running through this Chamber: between those who want it to be true so desperately that they blind themselves and those who understand that that kind of belief—the kind that calls a proposition true because we want it to be true—is the kind that saw an alliance between Saddam and al-Qaida, the kind that saw an Iraq full of WMDs, the kind that saw a mission accomplished 4 years ago.

But still, even if you grant that belief, even if you say that the surge, and nothing else, brought down the violence—is that our victory?

No. The surge was always a military means to a political end. Comptroller General David Walker put it well: "The primary point of the surge was to improve security . . . in order to provide political breathing room" for the Iraqi Government. President Bush has said much the same. The surge was always meant to open a window for political reconciliation. Nearly 800 Americans sacrificed their lives to keep that window open; thousands and thousands of Americans took wounds to keep that window open. What has the Iraqi Government done with it?

Failed to meet its own political benchmarks. Failed to enact oil legislation. Sustained a mass resignation of Sunni politicians, leaving more than half of its Cabinet seats vacant. Enjoyed a month-long vacation.

This September, 60 percent of Iraqis—and 93 percent of Sunnis—thought it was justified to kill American troops.

And during America's long sacrifice to keep civil war at bay, the Maliki Government has grown more sectarian than ever, more and more openly an arm of the Shiites, more and more actively prejudiced against Sunnis. Hundreds of Americans died to give breathing space to Iraqi politicians and they act as if Iraq doesn't exist.

Many of the Iraqi forces we have relied on to stabilize that country are little more than retooled sectarian gangs. What is stopping them from accepting our training, accepting our weapons, and then, as soon as the surge dies down, jumping once again down each other's throats?

In the name of unity and reconciliation, our policies have divided Iraq deeper and deeper, until, as George Washington University Middle East expert Marc Lynch has argued, Iraq becomes "a warlord state . . . with power devolved to local militias, gangs, tribes, and power-brokers, with a purely nominal central state."

That is Iraq with the surge in place. But President Bush has conceded that it can't continue past July; and soon, we will be confronted by Iraq without the surge. So I have a simple question for my colleagues this morning:

What then?

And as President Bush tries to find an answer, as he tries to cobble together a plan more than 4 years too late, our billions will continue to be poured into a desert sinkhole; our Nation will earn the enmity of more and more Muslims for our endless occupation; our military will be ground into the dirt, unit by unit, machine by machine, soldier by soldier; and young Americans will continue to die. And we will be not an inch safer.

That is why I have come to the floor this morning: not to pass judgment; not to score points; not to assign blame. But because as we hurtle on with all tactics and no strategy, the costs are becoming too heavy for us to bear.

There is only one realistic strategy, only one honest answer to: What then? Redeploy our combat forces from Iraq, starting immediately. Refocus the fight on al-Qaida, training those Iraqi forces we can trust, and protecting U.S. personnel and infrastructure. Rebuild our worn-down, battered military.

Our troops will have my respect for what they have done in Iraq for as long as I live. And I join President Bush in his fervent hope that their sacrifice would be enough to heal a shattered country. But my eyes are open. I know that the best hope for Iraq, and the best hope for America, lies in redeployment—not in another \$50 or \$70 billion poured down this hole. I have faith that time will open the eyes of every one of my colleagues; I hope they will begin by seeing the deep error of these bills.

• Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I oppose H.R. 4156, a bill that would link vital funding for our troops to a mandated timeline for withdrawal from Iraq. Not only is this bill irresponsible to the facts on the ground, it is irresponsible. Instead, we should approve S. 2340 and provide our military with the resources they require, free of conditions that would undermine their ability to conduct operations and build on their recent successes.

Today the Senate considers yet another bill mandating the withdrawal of U.S. combat forces from Iraq, regardless of conditions on the ground or the views of our commanders in the field. If this latest attempt sounds familiar, it

should—the majority has thus far engaged in no less than 40 legislative attempts to limit the ability of the President and his commanders to prosecute this war. And, just like the 40 votes that preceded this one, the result of this vote will undoubtedly be the same. The proponents of this legislation are well aware of this fact, and the fact that the President has pledged to veto legislation calling for a precipitous withdrawal from Iraq. Rather than move beyond these differences and ensure that our troops in the field receive the vital funding they need, however, we will go through this exercise yet again.

This legislation would mandate a withdrawal of U.S. combat forces within 30 days of enactment, leaving a smaller force authorized only to carry out narrowly defined missions, with the goal of ending our involvement, irrespective of the situation in Iraq, by December 15 of next year. Given that similar provisions have failed 40 times already, it is inconceivable that they would succeed now, when there is unambiguous progress in Iraq. The choice today is simple: do we build upon the clear successes of our current strategy and give General Petraeus and the troops under his command the support they require to complete their mission, or do we ignore the realities and legislate a premature end to our efforts in Iraq, accepting thereby all the terrible consequences that will ensue? The answer should be simple.

As we proceed with consideration of this bill, it is important to spend a few moments reviewing the current state of affairs in Iraq. We see today that, after nearly 4 years of mismanaged war, the situation on the ground in Iraq shows tangible signs of progress. The forces needed to implement General Petraeus's counterinsurgency plan have been in place for over 6 months and our military, in cooperation with the Iraqi security forces, continues to make significant gains in a number of areas.

The second in command in Iraq, LTG Ray Odierno, stated earlier this month that due to the recently implemented counterinsurgency operations, "we have been able to eliminate key safe havens, liberate portions of the population and hamper the enemy's ability to conduct coordinated attacks." General Odierno went on to add that "we have experienced a consistent and steady trend of increased security over the last four months, and I believe continued aggressive operations by both Iraqi and coalition forces are the most effective way to extend our gains and continue to protect the citizens of Iraq." According to a recent report issued by the Department of Defense, weekly IED attacks have decreased by 60 percent across Iraq since the beginning of Operation Phantom Thunder in mid-June.

The Associated Press reports that Iraqi civilian deaths have dropped sharply as a result of the "surge," from

1,791 in August to 750 in October. Mortar attacks by insurgents in October were the lowest on record since February of 2006, as were the number of "indirect fire" attacks on U.S. and coalition forces. The surge's success in establishing greater security has spurred a great increase in cooperation from Iraqi citizens, and MG Rick Lynch, commander of U.S. forces south of Baghdad, said he believes the decrease in rocket and mortar attacks will continue to hold because of a "groundswell" of support from regular Iraqis. "If we didn't have so many people coming forward to help, I'd think [the decrease in attacks] is a flash in the pan. But that's just not the case," General Lynch said.

We are all aware of the monumental strides our military has made in restoring order and reducing violence in Anbar Province. A province once declared "lost" to al-Qaida has begun a return to normalcy for many of its inhabitants. Locals, sickened by the brutality of insurgents and terrorists, have rejected violent extremism and have cooperated with U.S. and Iraqi forces to take the fight to the enemy. This partnership model combined with U.S. troops "living forward" is being replicated and producing real results all across the country.

In Ghazaliya, for example, once known as a strategic gateway to Baghdad for insurgents and a place where coalition convoys were regularly ambushed, the creation of joint security stations has led to a significant reduction in sectarian violence and IED attacks. Amariyah, a neighborhood in western Baghdad that just 6 months ago was a central operational location for al-Qaida in Iraq and plagued by high levels of bombings and shootings, is beginning to see a drastic reduction in violence and many residents are beginning to experience some semblance of normal life. None of this is to argue that Baghdad or other regions have suddenly become safe, or that violence has come down to an acceptable level, or that victory lies just around the corner. On the contrary, the road ahead remains, as it always has been, long and hard. Violence is still at unacceptable levels in some parts of the country, reconstruction of important infrastructure lags, and the Maliki government remains unwilling to function as it must. No one can guarantee success or be certain about its prospects, but, by the same token, no one should dismiss the positive developments that have resulted from this new strategy in Iraq.

Nor can we dismiss the enormous costs of American failure in Iraq. Many of my colleagues would like to believe that, should the bill we are currently considering become law, it would mark the end of this long effort. They are wrong. Should the Congress force a precipitous withdrawal from Iraq, it would mark a new beginning, the start of a new, more dangerous effort to contain the forces unleashed by our disengage-

ment. If we leave, we will be back—in Iraq and elsewhere—in many more desperate fights to protect our security and at an even greater cost in American lives and treasure. Now is not the time for us to lose our resolve. We must remain steadfast in our mission, for we do not fight only for the interests of Iraqis, we fight for ours as well.

That means approving the support that our fighting men and women need. The funding contained in this supplemental is not, as some have characterized it, the "President's money." This money is for the troops. This funding is to provide them with the equipment and proper training they require to fulfill their mission, funding to protect our men and women from roadside bombs and other attacks, funding to enable them to bring this war to a successful end. Holding our military's funding hostage to a repetitive and futile attempt to score political points is unconscionable.

Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England recently wrote to the chairman of the House Appropriations Committee about the effects of this legislation. "Without this critical funding," he wrote, "the Department will have no choice but to deplete key appropriations accounts by early next year. In particular, the Army's Operation and Maintenance account will be completely exhausted in mid-to-late January. This situation will result in a profoundly negative impact on the defense civilian workforce, depot maintenance, base operations, and training activities." Secretary of Defense Robert Gates said just yesterday that, should the money contained in this bill be withheld, he will have to "lay off 200,000 civilian employees and contractors, terminate military contracts and partially shut down U.S. military bases." Army Secretary Pete Green went on to add that without these funds, the negative effects "will fall most heavily on...home based troops and their families."

I have seen a lot during my time in the Senate, but few events sink to the level of what we are witnessing today. I understand the frustration that many feel after nearly 4 years of mismanaged war. I share their frustration and sadness. But we must remember to whom we owe our allegiance. Not to short-term political gain, but to the security of America, to those brave men and women who risk all to ensure it, and to the ideals upon which our Nation was founded. That responsibility is our dearest privilege and to be judged by history to have discharged it honorably will, in the end, matter so much more to all of us than any fleeting glory of popular acclaim, electoral advantage or office. Let us not sacrifice the remarkable gains our service men and women have made by engaging in a game of political brinksmanship. There is far too much at stake.

I urge my colleagues to oppose this bill.●

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, H.R. 4156, the House-passed bill providing

bridge funding for the Iraq war, is unacceptably weak. While I will support cloture on the motion to proceed to consideration of that bill, my vote should not be misinterpreted as a vote in favor of this bill. By supporting cloture on the motion to proceed, I am voting in favor of the Senate having the opportunity to debate and amend it. I have already filed an amendment to the bill that consists of the Feingold-Reid amendment offered to the Defense Department authorization bill earlier this year. Unfortunately, it appears that the Republicans will not even allow the Senate to have meaningful debate on a war that has no end in sight and that does not have the backing of the American people.

But Democrats aren't off the hook either. H.R. 4156 purports to attach some strings to the funding it provides, but those strings are so thin and pliable as to be virtually meaningless. Since Democrats assumed control of Congress with a mandate from the American people, we have made progress toward changing course in Iraq, and I have supported efforts to increase pressure on this administration to listen to the American people. At this point, giving the President money to continue the war while only setting a "goal" for concluding the redeployment of our troops is insufficient. I am afraid we are moving backwards, not forward, with this new bill.

I spoke at some length yesterday about the administration's flawed strategy in Iraq, so I will not repeat myself today. I will say, however, that the administration's policy is indefensible. The American people know that, which is why they voted the way they did in November. They want us out of Iraq, and they want us out now. They don't want to give the so-called "surge" time and they are right. The surge is a delaying tactic, an effort to buy time. We can't afford to spend any more time, or money, on a war that is hurting our own national security. We must act and we must do it now.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I have a simple message this morning. We need to get the funds to the troops, and we need to do it now. The Secretary of Defense told us yesterday that the money for the Army and Marine Corps will soon run out, that he will have to start writing pink slips, tearing up contracts, and reducing missions at military bases. If we don't approve these funds for training and supplies that are needed to protect these brave men and women in the field, that is exactly what will happen.

Are we about to deny all these supplies just as the successes of General Petraeus's plan have become more clear? Attacks are down, casualties are down, political cooperation is taking root at the local level. We should not leave our forces in the field without

the funding they need to accomplish the mission for which they have been deployed.

The Pelosi bill, if it were to get to the President's desk, would be vetoed, as was the supplemental bill sent to the President earlier this year that contained a withdrawal date. We need to get our troops everything they need, and we need to get it to them now.

THE FARM BILL

A word about the farm bill. We all know we are going to pass a farm bill. Any suggestion to the contrary is laughable. I am disappointed that the majority has filed cloture on the bill. I am even more disappointed that from the get-go, the parliamentary device of filling up the tree was used on a 1,600-page bill so that one Member of the Senate could dictate to everybody else what amendments would be allowed, if any. This is not the way to go forward.

I am not sure how the majority defines wide-open debate, but this is certainly a no-amendments process which is stunningly observed in a body that has passed a number of farm bills over the years. As I mentioned on the first day of floor consideration, we have been down this road before.

During the last farm bill, when the Democrats were in the majority, then-Leader Daschle attempted to limit amendments. He failed three times. I am going to confidently predict today that this unfair procedural tactic is going to fail again. In 2002, after the majority finally agreed to an open-amendment process, final passage of the farm bill occurred fairly quickly—about a week. So we went through a somewhat similar dance. The tree was not filled, but there was premature cloture filed. Cloture was defeated several times. When the games stopped, we went back to the farm bill. We had an open process for a week and passed it.

We would probably be passing the farm bill today had we not used this process last week. We could have gone through the amendment process and worked our way through it and gotten to final passage. On today, instead of defeating cloture after an unfair process for 10 days, we could have been and would have been sending a farm bill on to conference with the House had we employed an open process which the Senate almost always insists upon. The farm bill will not pass today because the games have not stopped. But I will confidently predict at some point they will stop. We will have an open process and, in about a week, we will get a farm bill and get a conference and do the important work we need to do for America's farmers.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, whatever time runs past 9:30, I will use leader time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The leader has that right.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, on the farm bill, what has happened these past 10

days is extraordinarily wrong and negative. Today the Republicans have a decision to make: Are they going to allow the farm bill to proceed? Everyone out there from all over this country who is concerned about the farm bill, I want their eyes directed toward the Republican votes cast on this today. If they try to hide under some procedural nonsense, it is outlandish.

If cloture is invoked on the farm bill, there would be 30 hours of offering relevant amendments. Isn't that enough? Is it necessary that we have a farm bill where we debate immigration again; where we debate foreign policy, including the Iraq war; medical malpractice? The answer is no.

IRAQ

I would like to travel back in time, 10 months past, January 10, 2007, the exact date. In that second week of 2007, America was reaching the fourth full year of the war in Iraq, still without clear purpose, plan, or Presidential leadership. President Bush had faced a stinging rejection of his Iraq strategy by the votes in November. That is an understatement. He had fired his Defense Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, much too late, but he did fire him. Republicans in the House and Senate were publicly and privately breaking ranks with his strategy. The demand and imperative to change course and end the war were clear. For the first time in his Presidency, there was real reason to believe he would heed the call for change. But on that day in January, the President did just the opposite. He called for a surge of forces in Iraq, not a responsible transition out of combat, not a refocus on the war on terror, but a plan to sink us further into the intractable Iraqi civil war.

What were the goals of that surge? Here are the President's own words:

The strategy I announced in January is . . . aimed at helping the Iraqis strengthen their government so that it can function even amid violence.

It seeks to open space for Iraq's political leaders to advance the difficult process of national reconciliation, which is essential to lasting security and stability.

Fast-forward to today, 10 months later. It is indisputable that the goals of the surge have failed. As we speak, there are 187,500 American troops in Iraq. The Iraqi Parliament created eight benchmarks for progress toward national reconciliation. These benchmarks were passed by this Congress on a bipartisan basis and signed by the President. According to an independent analysis by the General Accounting Office, the watchdog of Congress, and this country, only one and a half of eight legislative benchmarks have been achieved. By any standard, even the math of the Republicans, that is a failing grade.

Iraq, a country with huge natural resources, I can remember the first time I met with Iraqi leaders right back here in then-Senator Frist's office. We were told by the Iraqi President that he disagreed with the international assumption that Iraq had the second

largest supply of oil in the world. He said: We have the largest supply of oil in the world.

Why are we pouring the treasures of this country into a country with the highest oil reserves in the world?

Without evidence of reconciliation, the Bush administration and its allies are trying a new playbook—pointing to recent reductions in violence. To be clear, any shift that makes conditions less dangerous for our troops and the Iraqi people is welcome news. But take, for example, what we read in the papers today. This past month, there were “only” 1,560 violent explosions with explosive devices in Iraq—“only” 1,560 in the last month. That is down from 3,200. Sounds like a lot of violence to me.

We must not forget that 2007 has been the deadliest year for our troops in the entire war. We must remember that about 3,900 Americans have been killed. We must remember that tens of thousands have been gravely wounded. According to the Joint Economic Council, more than \$1 trillion already has been spent on the Iraq war. And 5 million Iraqi men, women, and children have fled their neighborhoods or left the country altogether—about half and half; half have left the country and about 2½ million have been displaced—out of a total population of about 27 million people.

With these staggering costs and political reconciliation nowhere in sight, how would the President honestly judge his troop surge? We know how General Petraeus rates it. In a letter to the troops he wrote:

One of the justifications of the surge, after all, was that it would help create the space for Iraqi leaders to tackle the tough questions and agree on key pieces of national reconciliation legislation. It has not worked out as we had hoped.

General Petraeus.

And why has reconciliation failed?

Yesterday's Washington Post reported the alarm among our military leaders that it is clear the Iraqis are simply not doing their part. Quoting from one article:

U.S. military officials expressed growing concern over the Iraqi government's failure to capitalize on sharp declines in attacks against U.S. troops and Iraqi civilians. . . .

The lack of political progress calls into question the core rationale behind the troop buildup President Bush announced in January, which was premised on the notion that improved security would create space for Iraqis to arrive at new power-sharing agreements.

Our troops continue to fight and die valiantly; and our treasury continues to be depleted rapidly—for a peace we seem far more interested in achieving than Iraq's own political leaders—a peace we want. The Iraqi leaders do not seem to want one.

Meanwhile, the hidden costs of the war are only growing. Our military is stretched nearly to a breaking point, which has prompted Secretary Colin Powell to say: “The army is [nearly] broken.”

New evidence emerges every day that President Bush's obsession with Iraq has come at the expense of Afghanistan, once viewed as a success.

Now the opium trade in that country is at an all-time high. Ninety-three percent of the world's opium this year is coming from Afghanistan. Think of the misery around the world that it has created. Violence is at its highest since the American intervention in Afghanistan, and it was reported yesterday that the Taliban has vastly stepped up its efforts.

Meanwhile, bin Laden is still free, taunting and threatening us with videotapes, and his al-Qaida network—according to the Bush administration's own intelligence—has regrouped and is stronger than ever.

We need to look no further than the crisis in Pakistan as a reminder that the world can change overnight, and our ability to respond nimbly to new challenges is essential.

Are we prepared to do so? General Casey, head of the Army, a few weeks ago, said this:

The current demand for our forces exceeds the sustainable supply. We are consumed with meeting the demands of the current fight, and are unable to provide ready forces as rapidly as necessary for other potential contingencies.

The evidence—from General Casey, from Secretary Powell, from the General Accounting Office, and from constant news reports—is indisputable. Yet President Bush has demanded another \$200 billion with no accountability at all.

But the choice is ours. Those of us who think the answer in Iraq is more of the same should approve the President's request. If you think we should simply stay the course, approve the President's request. But if you think it is time to turn the page and take a responsible path out of Iraq, approve the bridge fund bill that came from the House.

We will never turn away from our courageous troops.

A couple of days ago, we sent a bill to the President that he signed for \$470 billion. People are out here now, after Secretary Gates has gone and talked to the President, saying we need the money tomorrow. We talked to Secretary Gates on Wednesday. On Wednesday, he said the Army is OK until the end of February, the Marines are OK until the middle of March. But he went on to say: If we have to start doing layoffs, we are going to go to the union members first. Everybody listen to that. The Secretary of Defense said: If we have to start laying people off, we are going to go to the union members first.

Does that speak of this administration, their despicable attitude toward men and women who work hard, and by a chance to improve their lot they are union members—they are going to get laid off first—when they got, 3 days ago, \$470 billion that, we were told on Wednesday, would take the Army until

the end of February and the Marines until the middle of March?

This bill requires the President to start bringing these troops home so they can get the heroes' welcome they so bravely have earned.

Our bill sets a reasonable goal for the end of combat operations, and it finally ensures that the President will be accountable to the Congress and to the people.

I urge all my colleagues to support this fair and reasonable legislation we received from the House of Representatives.

Finally, let me say this. The vote the Republicans are having us take is totally unnecessary. Yesterday, when the minority leader requested a vote on his motion to proceed, my staff told him he could offer his proposal to the House appropriations bill. He chose to ignore that and, instead, made the unusual motion to proceed by a minority—by a minority leader—so not only is this vote unnecessary, it is totally meaningless. It is a motion to proceed to a Senate appropriations bill.

Let me repeat that it is a motion to proceed to a Senate appropriations bill. Everyone knows, even in elementary school, that under our Constitution revenue bills must originate in the House of Representatives. So even if the Senate were to pass his bill, the House would refuse to act on it. This would be the case regardless of which party controls the House of Representatives.

The Republicans, when they controlled the House, also upheld their constitutional role in the appropriations process, and rightfully so. The only way to get the troops their funding is to act on the House-passed appropriations bill. Anything else is political posturing and does nothing to get the troops their needed funding.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 4156

In order to give the minority leader his vote, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of H.R. 4156—that is the House-passed bill—and that immediately after the clerk reports the bill, the minority leader be recognized to offer his bill as an amendment; that there be 1 hour for debate on his amendment, and that the Senate vote on his amendment upon the use or yielding back of time, with 60 votes needed to pass his amendment.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Mr. ALEXANDER. On behalf of the Republican leadership, I object.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

CLOTURE MOTION

Under the previous order, pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the

Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to S. 2340, a bill making emergency supplemental appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008.

Mitch McConnell, Saxby Chambliss, Bob Corker, Wayne Allard, Thad Cochran, John Cornyn, Kay Bailey Hutchison, Lisa Murkowski, Orrin Hatch, Richard Burr, Trent Lott, Mike Crapo, Pat Roberts, Chuck Grassley, Jon Kyl, Norm Coleman, Mel Martinez.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to proceed to S. 2340, a bill making emergency supplemental appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. LOTT) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWN). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 45, nays 53, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 410 Leg.]

YEAS—45

Alexander	Craig	Lieberman
Allard	Crapo	Lugar
Barrasso	DeMint	Martinez
Bennett	Dole	McConnell
Bond	Domenici	Murkowski
Brownback	Ensign	Roberts
Bunning	Enzi	Sessions
Burr	Graham	Shelby
Chambliss	Grassley	Snowe
Coburn	Gregg	Specter
Cochran	Hatch	Stevens
Coleman	Hutchison	Sununu
Collins	Inhofe	Thune
Corker	Isakson	Vitter
Cornyn	Kyl	Warner

NAYS—53

Akaka	Feinstein	Nelson (FL)
Baucus	Hagel	Nelson (NE)
Bayh	Harkin	Obama
Biden	Inouye	Pryor
Bingaman	Johnson	Reed
Boxer	Kennedy	Reid
Brown	Kerry	Rockefeller
Byrd	Klobuchar	Salazar
Cantwell	Kohl	Sanders
Cardin	Landrieu	Schumer
Carper	Lautenberg	Smith
Casey	Leahy	Stabenow
Clinton	Levin	Tester
Conrad	Lincoln	Voinovich
Dodd	McCaskill	Webb
Dorgan	Menendez	Whitehouse
Durbin	Mikulski	Wyden
Feingold	Murray	

NOT VOTING—2

Lott McCain

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 45, the nays are 53. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

ORDERLY AND RESPONSIBLE IRAQ REDEPLOYMENT APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008—MOTION TO PROCEED

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the clerk will report the motion to invoke cloture.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to H.R. 4156, the Orderly and Responsible Iraq Redeployment Appropriations Act, 2008.

Carl Levin, Robert Menendez, Claire McCaskill, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Richard J. Durbin, Tom Carper, Amy Klobuchar, Daniel K. Akaka, Jack Reed, Patty Murray, Sherrod Brown, Frank R. Lautenberg, Charles E. Schumer, S. Whitehouse, Debbie Stabenow, B.A. Mikulski, Harry Reid.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There will now be 2 minutes, with the time equally divided. Who seeks time?

The assistant majority leader is recognized.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, what will it take to end this war? How many lives? How many limbs? How many broken families? How many innocent victims?

The Senate has an opportunity, with this next vote, to start to bring this war to an end and to start to bring our soldiers home in an orderly, responsible way.

We know the President will not do this. But it is within our power, our authority, and our responsibility under the Constitution to do it. A vote now to move forward on this House appropriations bill will bring this war to an end in an orderly, responsible way.

I urge my colleagues, do not shirk your responsibility. Do not be on the wrong side of history.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who seeks time?

The Senator from Alabama is recognized.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, this summer, we had grim numbers coming out of Iraq and we had an election and we went through a soul-searching analysis of what to do. By an 80-to-14 vote, this Senate voted to send General Petraeus to Iraq and give him a chance to succeed. We had his full report in September. We had other reports from General Jones and GAO, and we concluded to continue this.

In recent weeks, progress has exceeded what we could have expected possible. This is not the right time to tie the hands of our military leaders. It is not the right thing to do—to leave any doubt that we are going to support the troops we have sent into harm's way.

I urge colleagues to not leave our troops in uncertainty and stand firm with a policy that seems to be working. Let's continue to monitor it. If it fails, we need to know that. But, right now, things are going well, and it would be wrong to undermine that in any way.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has expired. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call is waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to proceed to H.R. 4156, a bill making emergency supplemental appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. LOTT) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 53, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 411 Leg.]

YEAS—53

Akaka	Feinstein	Nelson (FL)
Baucus	Hagel	Nelson (NE)
Bayh	Harkin	Obama
Biden	Inouye	Pryor
Bingaman	Johnson	Reed
Boxer	Kennedy	Reid
Brown	Kerry	Rockefeller
Byrd	Klobuchar	Salazar
Cantwell	Kohl	Sanders
Cardin	Landrieu	Schumer
Carper	Lautenberg	Smith
Casey	Leahy	Snowe
Clinton	Levin	Stabenow
Collins	Lincoln	Tester
Conrad	McCaskill	Webb
Dorgan	Menendez	Whitehouse
Durbin	Mikulski	Wyden
Feingold	Murray	

NAYS—45

Alexander	Crapo	Lieberman
Allard	DeMint	Lugar
Barrasso	Dodd	Martinez
Bennett	Dole	McConnell
Bond	Domenici	Murkowski
Brownback	Ensign	Roberts
Bunning	Enzi	Sessions
Burr	Graham	Shelby
Chambliss	Grassley	Specter
Coburn	Gregg	Stevens
Cochran	Hatch	Sununu
Coleman	Hutchison	Thune
Corker	Inhofe	Vitter
Cornyn	Isakson	Voinovich
Craig	Kyl	Warner

NOT VOTING—2

Lott McCain

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 53, the nays are 45. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to reconsider vote No. 410.

Mr. DODD. I move to table that, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I enter a motion to reconsider vote No. 411.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion to reconsider is entered.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, at the request of the distinguished majority